1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation.

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls.

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable.

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire.

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting